



HEALTH ADVISORY

NORTH DAKOTA'S SMALLPOX VACCINATION PLAN

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

On Dec. 13, 2002, President Bush announced that the government will begin vaccinating millions of U.S. troops and emergency workers against the smallpox disease because of its potential use as a terrorist weapon.

In his announcement, the President outlined the three phases of the vaccination plan. "The plan will strengthen the security of America by improving significantly our capability to protect Americans in the event of a smallpox attack," Bush said.

The goal of Phase I and Phase II of the vaccination effort is to protect those individuals who would play a key role in responding to a terrorist attack involving smallpox.

The North Dakota Department of Health currently is awaiting formal notification from federal officials before beginning the Phase I vaccination effort, which is expected to take 30 days to complete. It is anticipated that, upon completion of Phase I, we will move into Phase II of the vaccination program.

Phase II will expand the vaccination program to include others who would respond to a bioterrorism incident, such as EMS workers, law enforcement, firefighters, clinicians and additional hospital personnel.

Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said, "As we initiate this process we'll be developing guidance for the expanded groups, because right now the states have not received any recommendations about how to go about immunizing the firemen and the police and all of the other health care workers who are not on the initial response team. We'll be working with our state and local partners to make sure that they can do this safely and in a time frame that works for them."

In Phase III, the vaccination would be offered to – but *not* recommended for – the general public.

In January 2003, the North Dakota Department of Health will hold a series of web casts designed to provide first responders, medical personnel, etc., with information about smallpox, smallpox vaccine and the state's vaccination program. Until then, if you would like more information, please visit the following websites:

- ☐ *North Dakota Department of Health* - www.health.state.nd.us
- ☐ *Archived smallpox web casts* - <http://www.health.state.nd.us/smallpox/>
- ☐ *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* - www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/reference/resource-kit.asp
- ☐ *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services* - www.hhs.gov/smallpox/